

Note

A new combination in *Corymbia* 'section Politaria': *C. citriodora* subsp. *variegata* (Myrtaceae).

Introduction

Hill and Johnson (1995) informally established *Corymbia* section 'Politaria' to comprise four species: *Corymbia citriodora* (lemon-scented gum), *C. maculata* (spotted gum), *C. henryi* (large-leaved spotted gum) and *C. variegata* (spotted gum). However, a recent study by McDonald et al. (2000) has shown that the taxonomic status of *C. variegata* warrants reappraisal. They presented evidence that *C. citriodora* and *C. variegata* could not be distinguished by either allozymes or morphology. They found that the main attribute distinguishing them was leaf oil composition (citronellal is the main leaf oil in *C. citriodora* and a-pinene in *C. variegata*). The two 'species' were thus considered to represent a single taxon comprising two chemotypes. Following field and herbarium studies (particularly by ARB) we concur with McDonald et al. (2000) and here formally subsume *C. variegata* under *C. citriodora* at subspecies rank. This will continue to allow a distinction between the two entities, while more accurately reflecting the closer relationship of *C. variegata* to *C. citriodora* than to *C. maculata*.

Most phytogeographical references on eucalypts, e.g. Blakely (1934), Boland et al., (1984), Chippendale (1988), Brooker et al. (1997) and Brooker and Kleinig (1999), treated *C. citriodora* subsp. *variegata* as the northern extension of *C. maculata*., although Chippendale (l.c.) lists *Eucalyptus variegata* as a synonym of *E. citriodora*. The presence of lemon-scented leaf oils, rather than morphological attributes, appears to have preoccupied the taxonomic approach of these authors. This is despite the findings of Maiden (1920), McKern (1954) and Larsen (1965), who also considered the two represented a single taxon comprising two chemotypes.

McDonald et al. (2000) also concluded that the two other 'Politaria' species, *C. maculata* (Hook.) K.D.Hill & L.A.S.Johnson and *C. henryi* (S.T.Blake) K.D.Hill & L.A.S.Johnson, represented vicariads as they were genetically and morphologically allied, while genetically distinct from the *C. citriodora*-*C. variegata* alliance. However, we consider that little would be gained by a change to infraspecific rank for these species as their relationship is well established and the nomenclatural change unnecessarily disruptive.

Taxonomy

Corymbia citriodora (Hook.) K.D.Hill & L.A.S.Johnson subsp. ***variegata*** (F.Muell.) A.R.Bean & M.W.McDonald **comb. et stat. nov.**

Eucalyptus variegata F.Muell., J. Linn. Soc., Bot. 3: 88 (1859); *Corymbia variegata* (F.Muell.) K.D.Hill & L.A.S.Johnson, Telopea 6: 389 (1995).
Type: Queensland, Burnett River, 1856, *F. Mueller* (holo: MEL; iso: K).

Corymbia citriodora subsp. *variegata* extends south of the Springsure-Maryborough region in Queensland to near Coffs Harbour in New South Wales and has foliage that lacks a lemon scent when crushed. *C. citriodora* subsp. *citriodora* extends north from the Springsure-Maryborough region in central eastern Queensland to the Atherton Tableland in north Queensland and has lemon-scented foliage when crushed. Further details on the two taxa (as *C. citriodora* and *C. variegata*) are given in Hill and Johnson (1995).

Within *C. citriodora* subsp. *citriodora*, McDonald et al. (2000) also noted morphological differences between northern populations (Mt Janet south to the White Mountains region) and southern populations (Mackay region south to the Springsure-

Maryborough region). The northern form differs in having narrower and more densely hairy juvenile leaves, narrower adult leaves and

bark with fewer mottles compared to the southern form. The taxonomic significance of these differences requires further study.

Key to taxa in *Corymbia* 'section *Politaria*'

- 1 Adult leaves broad-lanceolate to lanceolate, to 4.5 cm wide 2
 Adult leaves narrow-lanceolate, to 2.8 cm wide 3
- 2 Juvenile leaves to 9.0 cm wide, fruit to 2 x 1.5 cm
 (from near Grafton, NSW to the Brisbane region, Qld)..... **C. henryi**
 Juvenile leaves to 5.5 cm wide, fruit to 1.4 x 1.1 cm
 (from Taree to Eden in NSW and Mottle Range, Vic.) **C. maculata**
- 3 Leaves lemon-scented (N of Maryborough-Springsure to
 Atherton Tableland, Qld) **C. citriodora** subsp. **citriodora**
 Leaves not lemon-scented (S of Maryborough-Springsure to
 NW of Coffs Harbour, NSW) **C. citriodora** subsp. **variegata**

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